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Patrick X Disney 07/18/2006 08:32:31 AM From DB/Inbox: Patrick X  
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Text:

UNCLAS MUSCAT 01124

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MUSCATCX:  
ACTION: POLE  
INFO: OMC DAO DCM AMB PAO POLM

DISSEMINATION: POLE  
CHARGE: PROG

APPROVED: AMB:GGRAPPO  
DRAFTED: POLE:BMGRIMM  
CLEARED: NONE

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DE RUEHMS #1124 1981416  
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STATE FOR NEA/ARP, NEA/RA, OES/PCI  
STATE PASS USTR FOR J.BUNTIN

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [SENV](#) [PREL](#) [MU](#)  
SUBJECT: OMAN EYES CITES ACCESSION

REF: 05 MUSCAT 1684

¶1. In a July 17 meeting, the Ambassador discussed the status of Oman's accession to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES) with Under Secretary for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Sayyid Badr al-Busaidi (deputy-minister equivalent). Sayyid Badr noted that Oman has a keen interest in joining CITES, as the convention's principles are consistent with Omani government efforts to protect its environment and its endangered species.

¶2. Sayyid Badr highlighted the government's strong track record on environmental issues dating from the Sultan's rise to power in 1970, when he abolished hunting. The Sultan's concern for the environment has continued with the establishment of 14 nature reserves in order to protect wildlife species such as the Arabian oryx, Arabian gazelle, various species of sea turtles and other fauna and flora. The Arabian Oryx Sanctuary, located in the al-Wusta governate, protects at least 15 mammal species over approximately 25,000 square kilometers. The Ras al-Hadd Turtle Reserve, covering 120 square kilometers of land and 42 kilometers of coastline, provides a sanctuary for loggerhead and green turtle nesting grounds. Poachers are prosecuted for taking animals from the sanctuaries. For example, in March 2005, three Saudi nationals received a one-year prison term after being found guilty of attempting to trade in endangered animals from a sanctuary.

¶3. Oman is also active on the international front. For example, in November 2005, Oman presented its biennial Sultan Qaboos Award for Environmental Conservation to Australia's Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority and a Mexican environmentalist. The award, made possible through an Omani

donation to UNESCO, recognizes outstanding contributions by individuals or groups in the management and conservation of the environment. Oman is a signatory to the Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation and Management of Marine Turtles and their Habitats of the Indian Ocean and South-East Asia and recently hosted the Fourth Meeting of the Signatory States to the IOSEA Marine Turtle MOU.

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